

FILING A
DECERTIFICATION PETITION

Public Employment Relations Board

April 2015



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PERB'S JURISDICTION

The Public Employment Relations Board (PERB) is the neutral State agency responsible for administering and enforcing the laws which govern collective bargaining for employees of public schools (grades K-14),¹ State civil service,² the University of California, California State University and Hastings College of the Law,³ cities, counties and special districts,⁴ trial courts,⁵ and supervisory employees of the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority.⁶ PERB does not administer laws which affect employees of private industry, the federal government, and many public transit districts in California.

Please note that PERB's representation regulations and procedures are not applicable in many situations under the MMBA, Trial Court Act and Court Interpreter Act. Before filing a decertification petition with PERB concerning employees covered under one of these three Acts, please check with your employer to ascertain whether local rules providing for a decertification process exist. The information presented below addresses only situations where PERB's regulations are applicable.

WHAT IS A DECERTIFICATION PETITION?

A decertification petition is the vehicle whereby a group of employees in an established bargaining unit or an employee organization may bring about an election which allows employees to vote to either remove or replace their incumbent "exclusive representative."⁷

There are two different kinds of decertification petitions:

- 1) A petition may be filed by a group of employees seeking to remove their exclusive representative. This type of petition must be accompanied by signatures (called "proof

¹ Educational Employment Relations Act (EERA) California Government Code section et seq. The text of the EERA and other PERB-administered statutes is available on the PERB web site (www.perb.ca.gov).

² Ralph C. Dills Act (Dills) California Government Code section 3512 et seq.

³ Higher Education Employer-Employee Relations Act (HEERA) California Government Code section 3560 et seq.

⁴ Meyers-Milias-Brown Act (MMBA) California Government Code section 3500 et seq. PERB's jurisdiction over the MMBA excludes management employees and peace officers as defined in Section 830.1 of the Penal Code, as well as employees of the City of Los Angeles and County of Los Angeles.

⁵ Trial Court Employment Protection and Governance Act (Trial Court Act) California Government Code section 71600 et seq. and Trial Court Interpreter Employment and Labor Relations Act (Court Interpreter Act) California Government Code section 71800 et seq.

⁶ Transit Employer-Employee Relations Act (TEERA) California Public Utilities Code section 99560 et seq.

⁷ The "exclusive representative" is the employee organization that has been recognized or certified to represent the employees in the bargaining unit in their employment relations with the employer.

of support”) of at least 30 percent of the employees in the unit. This proof of support must clearly state that employees **NO LONGER DESIRE TO BE REPRESENTED BY THE INCUMBENT EXCLUSIVE REPRESENTATIVE**. If the petition qualifies for an election (see other filing requirements discussed below), the two ballot choices in the election would be the exclusive representative and “no representation.” In the election, the ballot entry which receives a simple majority of the valid votes cast is declared the winner.

- 2) A petition may also be filed by another employee organization which seeks to replace the incumbent by becoming the new exclusive representative of employees in the unit. This type of petition must be accompanied by at least 30 percent proof of support, which clearly states that employees **WISH TO BE REPRESENTED BY THE PETITIONING EMPLOYEE ORGANIZATION**. The ballot in the election would contain the names of both the incumbent exclusive representative and the petitioning employee organization, and also include the choice of “no representation.” Again, a simple majority determines the outcome.

Decertification petition requirements are detailed in PERB Regulations 32770 through 32776.⁸ For the MMBA, Trial Court Act and Court Interpreter Act, PERB’s decertification regulations are found at sections 61350 through 61380, 81350 through 81380 and 91350 through 91380, respectively.

WHAT IS PROOF OF SUPPORT?

“Proof of support” is signatures of employees on authorization cards, petitions, membership applications, etc., which clearly state the intent of the employees either to remove their current exclusive representative or to demonstrate their support for another employee organization. These signatures must each be dated and cannot be more than a year old at the time the petition is filed. Complete requirements for proof of support are spelled out in PERB Regulation 32700 and, for the MMBA, Trial Court Act and Court Interpreter Act, Regulations 61020, 81020 and 91020.

Proof of support should be filed with PERB only, and the petitioner must file the original documents. All proof of support materials filed with PERB are confidential documents; no other party may look at or receive copies of the support materials.

WHEN CAN A DECERTIFICATION PETITION BE FILED?

Generally, a decertification petition may be filed any time there is no collective bargaining agreement in effect, except that no decertification petition may be filed for a period of one year after an employee organization has been recognized or after the results of a representation election have been certified. If a valid contract is in effect, no decertification petition may be filed during the term of that contract, except during a certain period, referred to as the “window

⁸ PERB Regulations are codified at California Code of Regulations, title 8, section 31001 et seq. The text of the regulations is available on the PERB web site.

period,” before the expiration of the contract. Window period definitions are found in Regulations 33020 (EERA), 40130 (Dills Act), 51026 (HEERA), 61010 (MMBA), 71026 (TEERA), 81010 (Trial Court Act) and 91010 (Court Interpreter Act).

FILING THE DECERTIFICATION PETITION

The appropriate location for the filing of a decertification petition is one of the three PERB regional offices. EERA, MMBA, TEERA, Trial Court Act and Court Interpreter Act petitions must be filed in the regional office which serves the county in which the principal office of the employer is located. (See PERB Regulations 32075 and 32122.) University of California and Hastings College of the Law petitions must be filed in the San Francisco regional office. (PERB Regulation 32123(a).) California State University petitions must be filed in the Los Angeles office. (PERB Regulation 32123(b).) State of California petitions must be filed in the Sacramento office. (PERB Regulation 32124.)

Copies of the PERB Decertification Petition Form (PERB-1305) may be obtained from the PERB web site or by telephoning or visiting any of PERB's regional offices.⁹

The decertification petition form must contain the following information:

1. the name, address and telephone number of the employer, exclusive representative, and the agent of the group of employees or employee organization filing the petition;
2. a description of the established unit and approximate number of employees in the unit;
3. the date of recognition or certification of the incumbent and whether or not a contract exists;
4. the purpose of the decertification petition: i.e., because the employees desire no representation or because they wish to be represented by another employee organization.

A copy of the petition must be served, by mail or in person, upon all interested parties. A Proof of Service form must be completed and accompany the petition. (See PERB Regulation 32140.) Proof of Service forms are available on the PERB web site and at each of PERB's offices.

The completed decertification petition form, proof of 30 percent support and the completed proof of service form must be filed with the appropriate PERB regional office. (See PERB regulation 32135.) Other parties must be served with the petition and proof of service; only PERB is to receive the proof of support.

⁹ Use of the PERB form is not required under the MMBA, TEERA, Trial Court Act and Court Interpreter Act.

INVESTIGATION OF THE PETITION

Once the Decertification Petition is filed, a Board agent will be assigned to review the petition and determine its validity. The Board agent will contact all parties regarding the processing of the petition. If the petition is deemed timely and adequately supported by employees in the unit, an election will be scheduled. If the petition is declared invalid, a written administrative determination will be issued containing the reason(s) for the dismissal.

APPEAL OF A DISMISSAL

If a petition is dismissed, a written appeal may be filed with the Board itself. An original and 5 copies of the appeal must be filed in PERB's headquarters office in Sacramento within 10 days following the date of service of the decision or letter of determination. The appeal must be in writing and must state the specific issue(s) of procedure, fact, law or rationale that is appealed and state the grounds for the appeal. Service and proof of service of the appeal are required on all parties and on the regional office which issued the dismissal.

ASSISTANCE

If you have procedural questions regarding the preparation of a decertification petition, please contact the appropriate PERB regional office. If you require legal assistance or any advice, please contact your legal representative or the nearest County Bar Association for attorney referral services.

This booklet is meant to provide a GENERAL overview regarding the filing of a decertification petition and should not be exclusively relied upon in lieu of PERB regulations, case law and/or legal advice.

A complete copy of the statutes and PERB's regulations may be purchased from PERB. For an order form, contact the Publications Coordinator at (916) 327-2257 or by writing to:

Public Employment Relations Board
Publications Section
1031 18th Street, Suite 100
Sacramento, CA 95814

As noted above, the statutes and regulations are available on the PERB web site, found at www.perb.ca.gov. The statutes PERB administers can also be found at the State law library, county law libraries, and University of California law school libraries.

The applicable statute and PERB regulations should always be consulted prior to any filing to ensure that all requirements are met.